

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 332
By Koella

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Peaches Simpkins for
her meritorious service to the state of
Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the elected representatives of the state of Tennessee should
pause to pay tribute to those exemplary citizens who have given unselfishly of themselves, their
time and their talents to perpetuate the public good; and

WHEREAS, Peaches Gunter Simpkins has been one such remarkable public servant, a
lifelong Democrat having served in Democratic administrations, on Republican gubernatorial
staffs and in campaigns for candidates in both parties; and

WHEREAS, Peaches Gunter grew up in Gastonia, North Carolina, the daughter of Dan
Gunter, a councilman for more than a decade and mayor for two years, and his wife Dede; and

WHEREAS, the combination of her community activist father's influence and her
mother's protective nurturing produced in Peaches a character inclined to public service and
concern for the individual well-being of others; and

WHEREAS, Peaches Simpkins graduated from North Carolina State University in 1973
with a degree in political science. She received a masters degree in public administration a year
later, and now serves her alma mater with probity as a member of the Board of Trustees; and

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WHEREAS, she obtained her first state government job with the Health Facilities Commission, and in the process forged friendships with Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the Senate, John Wilder, and then House Speaker Ned McWherter; and

WHEREAS, in 1981, Governor Lamar Alexander invited Peaches Simpkins to join his senior gubernatorial staff, a position Speakers Wilder and McWherter urged her to accept; and

WHEREAS, as Governor Alexander's first term came to a close in 1982, Peaches Simpkins joined Hospital Alliance of Tennessee, Inc., as executive director, where she engaged in education and lobbying; and

WHEREAS, following the death of her husband, Senator Ed Blank in 1988, the widowed mother of three-year-old Raleigh Anne served on the Ned McWherter gubernatorial finance committee and was the first woman to chair the Tennessee Higher Education Commission during Governor Ned McWherter's administration; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, during her tenure as treasurer of the McWherter reelection campaign, Peaches Simpkins was drawn to the company of her soon-to-be husband, Nashville Banner editor Irby Simpkins, in whom she has found a loving marriage partner and constant supporter of her career; and

WHEREAS, when then Congressman Don Sundquist invited Peaches Simpkins to sign on with his gubernatorial bid she readily agreed, serving as Deputy Governor and Chief of Staff after his election in 1994, the first female deputy in 200 years; and

WHEREAS, following her departure from the Sundquist administration in December of 1996, Peaches Simpkins joined Women's Health Partners as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, during her remarkable career as a public servant, lobbyist and private health care executive, Peaches Simpkins has consistently demonstrated profound intelligence, acumen, a capacity for hard work and single-mindedness; and

WHEREAS, Peaches Simpkins's ready willingness to serve others and noteworthy record of public service are worthy of special recognition; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby honor and commend Peaches Gunter Simpkins for her meritorious public service to the State of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we thank her for her friendship and many kindnesses and wish her well in all her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.